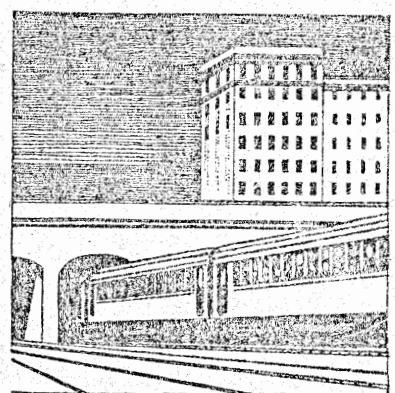
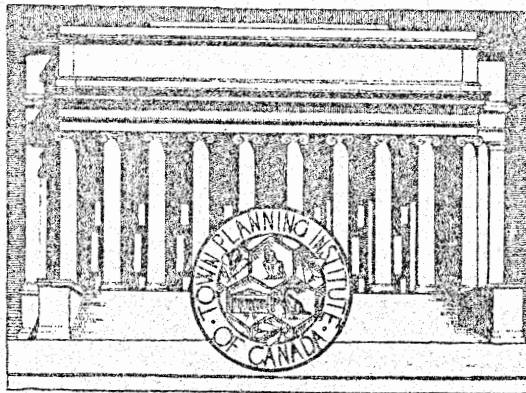


TOWN PLANNING



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APRIL, 1931

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NO. 2

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Editorial Committee:—Alfred Buckley, M.A., Editor, University Club, Ottawa, Canada; Noulau Cauchon, City
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TOWN PLANNING

VOL. X.

OTTAWA, APRIL, 1931

No. 2

Town planning may be defined as the scientific and orderly disposition of land and buildings in use and development with a view to obviating congestion and securing economic and social efficiency, health and well-being in urban and rural communities.

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City Hall
OTTAWA, ONT.
Phones: Queen 1250, Local 14.

Editor "TOWN PLANNING,"
The Journal of the Institute
ALFRED BUCKLEY, M.A.
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CITY PLAN FOR VANCOUVER NOW COMPLETE

The City of Vancouver has assumed eminent leadership in the Town Planning movement in Canada by the recent publication of a handsome volume of 388 pages entitled "A Plan for the City of Vancouver, British Columbia, including Point Grey and South Vancouver, and a General Plan of the Region."

Three years ago the City of Vancouver commissioned a distinguished firm of town planners to create a Plan of Vancouver to serve as a scientific guide to the future development of the city. The cost of the undertaking was \$40,000. The plan was completed well within the time and, with the amalgamation of Point Grey and South Vancouver, these areas were also brought under the aegis of the plan. The work also covers a general planning scheme for the whole Vancouver region, and may, therefore, be considered, to a certain extent, a Regional Plan for the Vancouver district.

"The reception given to the plan," writes the Secretary-Engineer of the Commission, "on the part of the civic authorities, the executives of the large corporations, the press and the citizens in general, lead us to believe that it will continue to be regarded as a vital and practical factor in the development of Vancouver for many years Vancouver's experience in respect of the value of zoning is such that a reversion to the conditions obtaining before

zoning restrictions were imposed would not for a moment be tolerated."

It is pointed out that the preparation of a plan by no means involves immediate expenditure of large sums of money. The plan is intended to control development for the best community uses for the next fifty or a hundred years. It is pointed out that money will be spent inevitably and the purpose of the plan is to ensure wise and scientific expenditure and to avoid costly and disastrous mistakes in normal development.

Though Canada has not yet caught on to the town planning movement with the interest and energy displayed in many other countries, the lead of Vancouver will have vast educational value for the whole of the Dominion, since the plan bears lively comparison with any modern planning project either on this continent or in the countries of Europe.

It will be understood that the completion of a plan is but the first step to the actual planning of a town or city or region. From that point the carrying out of the plan is the responsibility of the elected authorities. There is every reason to believe that the Vancouver authorities have no intention of allowing so great a piece of social engineering to be cast as rubbish to the void. At any rate the Vancouver Town Planning Commission may be trusted to see that so great a calamity will not hap-

pen without vigorous and sustained protest. There are times when city councils are not the best guardians of public interests.

As these words are written a news paragraph reaches us from the *Vancouver Province*. We quote it verbatim:

Town-planning commissioners today resolved that any project of a public or private nature which would cause alteration to the town plan of the city should be submitted to them for consideration as soon as it was made public.

Referring particularly to proposals to use the Marine Building as a City Hall, to build a pleasure pier on English Bay foreshore and construction of a stadium at Little Mountain by private interests, Mr. Arthur G. Smith, chairman, pointed out that the commission, which is vitally interested in the development of the city, had never had an opportunity to consider these matters.

Mr. Smith declared that "private interests should not be premitted to exploit this city in a manner which would place their own interests first and those of the people second."

We have had reason to compliment the Vancouver city council at different times on the fine spirit of co-operation manifested toward the work of the Town Planning Commission. Sometimes it has seemed to us that the very excellence of the Commission's work has made certain members of the council restive and touched the vanity of authority in sensitive places. This seems to be a case in point where the council is failing in good manners. Town planning has been defined as "civic good manners," replacing jungle methods by community civilization. Vancouver should know by this time how much it owes to a group of men who have given of their time and talents, most of them without any financial reward, to the creation of a Plan of Vancouver which is placing the Pacific coast city in the forefront of the cities of the world; cities which are regarding city planning as an economic necessity and as a manifest means of making an urban structure attractive and beautiful and efficient for all time.

It is high time that the patriotism associated with the savage business of war should give place to a patriotism concerned with the building of towns and cities, not only "fit for heroes to live in" but also fit for the multitudes of families who do the hard work of the world. This is the aim of the Vancouver Town Planning Commission and there is no finer form of patriotism.

A description of the Vancouver Plan will be found on another page, written by J. Alexander Walker, Secretary-Engineer to the Planning Commission, and one of the pioneers of town planning in British Columbia. Very little has been heard about the Plan of Vancouver in eastern Canada, and yet

any thoughtful reader of the published plan must see that the Vancouver Plan will make history in the social life of Canada. It can no longer be said that we must look to foreign countries for instruction in the meaning and purpose of a noble plan for one of the cities of Canada with a manifest destiny as one of the future great cities of the world. A glance at the frontispiece of the volume, here reproduced, as the first illustration of Mr. Walker's article, will show to the observer how the first impulse to found a city on that wondrous site has been justified.

But visitors to and residents in the city of Vancouver, with town planning sense, know very well that this striking picture taken from the air does not exhibit a crowd of more or less costly and disastrous mistakes made in the early shaping of Vancouver City.

Fifty years ago the modern concept of a planned city, with scientific and humanistic consideration not only for expensive residences and show buildings such as hotels and wealthy department stores, but also for the planning of work-people's homes, the grouping of public buildings, the segregation of industries, the planning and planting of impressive and efficient streets, the adequate provision for recreation, community control of beaches and bathing places for the free enjoyment of the people, regulated transportation in respect of railways, street cars and harbours, so that community rights shall not be infringed and costs multiplied by bad arrangement, was scarcely born.

Cities in past times had been planned after a fashion but largely for the benefit of kings and princes, aristocratic families and war-beaters. Proponents of industry and trade were allowed to do pretty much as they liked, regardless of the welfare of the community. Of this confusion and social inefficiency there are many examples in Vancouver, which do not show on this remarkable photograph. Areas that present an unlovely hodge-podge of industry and residences and some quarters where the ugly word and the ugly thing called slums cannot be denied. This is the answer to the argument that cities grow naturally and, therefore, there is no need for the costly fuss called town planning. There is nothing natural about the traditional growth of the modern town. Nature has an exquisite principle of order and development.

In Vancouver the time had come to "save the city" and make history again in the Vancouver region not less important than the arrival of Captain George Vancouver in 1793 and the advent of the railway in 1887.

Fortunately there was a group of town planning enthusiasts, a branch of the Town Planning Institute of Canada, ready to assume the responsibility and technically qualified to lead a vigorous movement

for the planning of Vancouver.

Mr. Walker rather unkindly says that so far back as 1912 there had been "sporadic outbursts of oratory, editorials and newspaper correspondence" on this subject. The present writer was responsible for much of this sporadic "oratory." Full page illustrated articles appeared on the planning theme in a local newspaper now listed among the casualties of journalism. Perhaps they were futile, but perhaps again they did something to prepare the public mind which eventually passed that appropriation for \$40,000 which made the Plan of Vancouver possible. Even at this date the citizens of North Vancouver refuse to pass an appropriation of \$5,000 for a waterfront planning scheme which should have been tackled any time during the last twenty-five years, and which if undertaken would have attracted thousands of residents to the north shore. On one of the finest townsites in the world there is no waterfront esplanade nor promenade where the citizens may assemble in the summer months for recreation or outdoor rest. Nothing on the waterfront belongs to the people. It has all been grabbed by industries or shack owners or residences and its potentialities grossly neglected. The people have no joy in what might have been a civic asset of priceless value. Some outbreaks of "oratory" seem to be needed at North Vancouver—to be succeeded of course, as in the case of Vancouver, by the more practical work of a group of scientific and socially-minded planners, not subject to "oratory," but finely informed on ways and means of getting a thing done and finding the cash to do it.

The Plan of Vancouver provides a liberal education in the art and science of city planning. The journalism of town planning in Canada has now a home product of dramatic and enduring value. We are growing accustomed to refer to the Vancouver Plan and the Vancouver "method." In the last issue of this journal we pointed out that there is no settled or standard method of approach to the town planning problem, when groups of citizens begin to demand attention to the subject from their civic authorities. It is most extraordinary that the initiative in town planning in Canada is so seldom taken by the city council, the elected representatives of the people. There are many city councils still which refuse to admit the utility and function of the Town Planning Commission. There are also city councils which demand, with ill suppressed irritation when public pressure is administered: "Cannot our own engineers and surveyors do all the town planning we need?" In most cases the answer is probably in the affirmative, if the city councils would recognize that their city engineers have no spare time from their routine duties and cannot create a plan for a city unless they are given time or supplied with adequate technical assistance to undertake a new

work of great complexity and prolonged study. Some cities, such as Saskatoon, are fortunate enough to have highly trained university engineers and other technical men who are willing to do preliminary planning work on a voluntary basis, calling in a town planning consultant to supervise the more or less completed plans. But councils should recognize that this is quite an unusual condition of civic good fortune. Other councils labour under the delusion that a non-technical committee of the council can create a plan for a great city in *their* spare time. This has been tried at Winnipeg and has resulted in manifest failure and years of waste time and talk.

The city council of Vancouver, on the recommendation of the town planning commission, decided with practical unanimity to employ a distinguished American firm, Harland Bartholomew and associates, to undertake the work over a period of three years and at a cost of \$40,000. The plan was completed well within the time. The planning firm presented intelligent progress reports during the period to keep the council, the newspapers and citizens properly informed as to what was being done and what was contemplated. Finally, they presented a completed report of great comprehensiveness, and intelligible to every citizen of average common sense. While the city slept, as the novelist would say, the plan developed. The authority of knowledge and experience was respected, as is the common and reasonable attitude to the specialist in engineering, architecture, and other applied sciences. So far as we know there were no daily visits from fussy aldermen to instruct the planners how the work should be done. Recognition of technical authority over a definite period seems to have simplified the process. The business of the firm was to tackle a problem in applied technical and social science with complete indifference to local political affiliations and the customary demands for special consideration on the part of "important" and self-seeking residents.

Of the cooperation of local technical men it is impossible to speak at this distance with adequate knowledge, but of the disastrous jealousies and antipathies that often arise among technical and artistic men we have heard nothing whatever and have reason to believe that the cooperative spirit has been sustained with remarkable simplicity.

Among the group of town planners in Vancouver who have brought the work to the magnificent consummation of the published report it is probable that paid officers were in the minority. The Town Planning Commission is a body of unpaid citizens who have acted as an advisory board to the city council, an intelligence bureau in a wider sense than a mere news agency. They have studied to keep the work at an exceptionally high level of intelligent procedure and have resisted throughout those ten-

dencies to poverty of social thinking which so often bring great social schemes to naught. They have been fortunate in a chairman, Mr. Arthur G. Smith, who has given to the cause over a period of year a rich store of legal experience which might have cost the city thousands of dollars. As an independent citizen he has exercised personal courage and sense of responsibility to the community which has withstood the occasional shocks of aldermanic perversity, such as the one quoted above, with fine determination not to be beaten or to abandon the work.

What we have called the Vancouver method may not seem to have anything very original about it. A specialist piece of work had to be done—the planning and replanning of a modern city and region with half a century of history behind it; with many mistakes to rectify, so far as possible, and many problems of scientific development to solve. Obviously the work required special training, knowledge and experience on the part of the executors of the job. The Vancouver authorities took counsel and selected a firm of established reputation to do the work. Such procedure is quite common where a single bridge has to be built or a main sewer to be constructed. The method has been successful. It has worked. While the city council has carried on its routine duties the city has been planned.

Yet there are city councils all over Canada who will not see the obvious. They spend years and decades in trying to economize by refusing to appoint competent men to plan their towns or cities and spend more money in costly talk and delay and confusion than would finance an entirely satisfactory plan, prepared by men who know how to do the job and do not need to spend years learning how to do it.

In the case of Vancouver an American firm was chosen. This does not mean that there are no Canadian firms competent to undertake the work. It means that the science of town planning is new in this country and that Canadian firms have not yet had the extended experience of foreign firms, chiefly because the city councils have not yet awoke to the importance of planning and have not given the planners a chance. The decision of the Vancouver authorities was practically unanimous; they were in their rights and their action has been justified in the prompt creation of a magnificent plan in the minimum of time and with the finest business efficiency.

But the field for Canadian planning is enormous and the time must be at hand when Canadian planners must get the recognition which is their due. In the absence of systematic teaching of town planning in the universities the Town Planning Institute of Canada has grouped a band of some two hundred men, most of them waiting proper opportunity to take up planning work in Canada. There is no doubt that most city engineers and surveyors are

quite competent to undertake the planning and replanning of their towns and cities, if they could secure time from routine duties for proper study and receive adequate technical assistance. But this is just what many city councils are unwilling to concede. The city engineer who is asked to produce a city plan like a magic rabbit from a magic hat should at once have given to him an assistant city engineer to carry on the routine duties while he gives his undivided attention to the creation of a plan. Probably he would also require two or three assistant draughtsmen. It is not fair to presume that he cannot do the work until he is given a decent opportunity to prove the issue.

On the other hand, there is this to be said for the appointment of an outside firm, whether this means a foreign firm or a firm outside the city in question. Such firm is less likely to be bothered with aldermanic interference or be subject to the demands of local "important" people seeking to profit at the expense of the community. It has a problem in social science to solve. It respects the welfare of the community but is not obliged to be a "respector of persons."

The lesson of the Vancouver Plan should be noted by all city councils in Canada. It is that a town or city cannot be planned unless the city is willing to appoint competent officers either from their own city or from other cities to do the work. It is no spare time job either for local technical officials or for non-technical committees of the council.

The Vancouver Plan is published by the Vancouver City at the small cost of \$2.50, the price of a detective story. It should be in every library in Canada and on the table of every city council.

VANCOUVER "PROVINCE" v. CITY COUNCIL

The Town Planning Commission of Vancouver is a body created by statute. Some of its members are nominees of the City Council; others by virtue of their position in other public bodies, as, for instance, the chairman of the Harbor Board and the School Board. The business of the commission is to advise the City Council and the citizens of Vancouver, so that the city "may be planned in a systematic and orderly way . . . and that economies may be effected in the industrial and business activities of communities;" the language quoted here being that of the Town Planning Act itself. We draw attention to these facts for the purpose of saying that if the Town Planning Commission is to be ignored, it had better be abolished, and the statute had better be repealed.

Three proposals, naturally within the province of the commission, have lately come before the people of this city: to use the Marine Building as a City Hall; to build a pleasure pier at English Bay; to permit a private company to construct and operate an athletic stadium at Little Mountain Park. On none of the projects, according to Mr. Arthur G. Smith, chairman of the commission, has the official and legal town planning body been consulted in any way. He complains of this, and

he says that thus to ignore the commission is neither sensible nor proper.

We thoroughly endorse this complaint. The need for town planning in Vancouver is not less now than it used to be, but actually it is greater than ever. The whole city is eloquent of examples of lost money, energy, convenience and beauty, simply because we had neither wisdom enough nor patience enough to build and plan for the necessities of tomorrow, rather than to take the easiest—and very often the dearest—way of getting something done today. It is perfectly true that the City Council, or any other responsible elected authority, is under no binding statutory obligation to take the advice of the Town Planning Commission, but it is at least under the obligation of courtesy and of common sense to consult it about any project which affects the town plan of this city. For that plan, if the City Council will permit the reminder, was paid for by the people of Vancouver, and has cost, one way or another, not much less than \$100,000. Also, if the present City Council does not mind, it stands badly in need of this sort of advice.—Vancouver Province.

News and Notes

MR. CAUCHON GOES TO EUROPE

Mr. Noulan Cauchon, town planning consultant to the City of Ottawa is representing the Town Planning Institute of Canada at the International Town Planning and Housing Congress to be held in Berlin at the beginning of June. He left Canada on March 13 en route to Glasgow, whence he travelled to Edinburgh, Liverpool and Manchester, to fulfil lecturing engagements. In Manchester Mr. Cauchon will study the Wythenshawe housing development where the hexagonal system of house planning has been adopted, and where millions of dollars are being spent on modern housing under government and municipal auspices. It is well known here to those interested in modern housing, and familiar with the great national housing schemes for working families in Europe, that Mr. Cauchon has been for some years an apostle of the hexagonal system of grouping houses with a view to securing the maximum of light and sunshine for dwellings, interior playgrounds and great economy in road costs.

We have not yet begun to insist on the natural right to light and sunshine for home-makers and office and factory workers. This is being written in a "well" where the sunshine never penetrates the whole area of the working room from January to December, and never throws a shaft of sunshine at the windows for the greater part of the year. Yet sunshine is as necessary to health as food and drink and raiment. Light and sunshine are stolen from the common people by the worship of property interests, embodied in obsolete building by-laws, and one in ten thousand saves up to buy an ultra violet ray machine to get a little artificial sunshine to keep the life forces moderately sound.

Doubtless it is true to say that Mr. Cauchon is

better known in this regard on the European continent, where his advocacy of the hexagonal system has attracted much more study and attention, than in Canada. The proof would seem to be that the Wythenshawe development at Manchester has lifted the principle from the region of theory into practical illustration.

From Manchester Mr. Cauchon will proceed to London and there will study once more the great housing schemes of the London County Council, the progress of regional planning and the prospects of the new government measure for creating legal authority and funds to make regional planning a first class employment project as well as a powerful means for bringing large regions of urban, suburban and country areas under the management of independent authorities, interested in social science and not in the incidence of profit.

In London also Mr. Cauchon will study the Gilwell Boy Scouts Headquarters and Training Camp in preparation for the opening of the Canadian Boy Scouts Headquarters at what is coming to be called "Mystery Island" to which Mr. Cauchon will give attention on his return toward the end of June. The leasing of the island from the Quebec government has already been consummated and in that paradise of lakes and mountains an energetic effort will be made this summer to found a national home for the Canadian Boy Scouts. Perhaps the time will come when a prophet will have honour in his own country.

Mr. Cauchon's next objective will be Rome, where extensive town planning projects are under way, and from thence he will go to Berlin to the International Town Planning and Housing Conference, particulars of which have already been given in this Journal. His tour will also cover certain lecturing engagements in Paris.

* * *

PEACE RIVER TOWN PLANNING COMMISSION RECONSTITUTED

Some months ago the Peace River Town Planning Commission resigned in a body, on the ground that it was hopeless to expect co-operation and encouragement from the local council. The Commission has been reconstituted with Dr. Sutherland as Chairman and Dr. L. G. Robinson as Secretary, and the Commission is already busy with a programme of improvements regarding school sites and new roads which has every promise of receiving reasonable consideration from the council.

The social value of a Town Planning Commission, composed of thoughtful citizens devoted to the one subject of better community planning and asking neither fees nor participation in the domestic routine work of the council, is being steadily learned in Alberta towns. It is needed badly in new towns to encourage that long-sighted view of town develop-

ment which sees more than the temporary convenience of individuals in the erection of buildings; which sees the need of a plan to arrest ugliness, to prevent expensive and disastrous mistakes and to promote an intelligent type of community life. It is easy to say that these desiderata can be and should be attended to by the local council, but everybody knows that the average council is so cluttered up with routine duties and pestered with personal demands from self-regarding individuals that the planning of a town, and especially of a new town, usually gets no consideration at all.

The provincial Town Planning office is expecting much benefit to accrue to Peace River by the supervision of its town planning needs on the part of the new Chairman of the Commission.

* * *

ALBERTA GOVERNMENT VOTE \$13,850 FOR TOWN PLANNING

An attempt was made last month by a section of the Alberta Legislature to eliminate an appropriation of \$13,850 for town planning work under the Department of Municipal Affairs. Mr. C. L. Gibbs, Labour member for Edmonton, and Chairman of the Provincial Town Planning Advisory Board, deprecated the destruction of the admirable body of work built up by the Alberta Town Planning Bureau during the last two years. The appropriation passed. Said Mr. Gibbs:

If you do away with this branch, you will give a blow to the idea that it will not recover from. Those who are becoming interested will slide back and the brush will grow up in those places where clearing has taken place. Moreover people engaged in this work will disperse to the four winds and even if started again, it would take two years to get back to the point where we are at present. Then we would find considerable difficulty in obtaining an efficient staff, as these people would be reluctant to cast their lot with us if they knew that on the first sign of depression we would say, 'off with their heads.'

* * *

BRITISH HEALTH MINISTER'S ATTITUDE TO TOWN PLANNING

"Mr. Arthur Greenwood, Minister of Health, speaking at Colne yesterday, said that he believed that the Slum Clearance Act was a substantial piece of legislation and had very valuable possibilities in it if used properly by local authorities. If those authorities did not do their duty then there were strong default powers in the Act which would enable him to do it for them.

"Frankly I do not want to have to do that," he said. "You get the best work out of people when it is done willingly and if people are driven it often

makes all kinds of trouble. But, of course, these default powers are there to be used if necessary."

"There was a need for organization and rationalization in regard to the whole problem of housing and building. England was in the mess that it was to-day because nobody ever planned it and nobody was seriously planning it to-day. They saw in London new lines of buildings just trailing farther and farther into the country without any forethought or proper plan, and making England uglier and uglier. It was too unscientific and his next job was that of planning and of looking at the land of England to get powers for local authorities to enable them to control future developments on scientific and proper lines. He was hoping to get a Planning Bill through in the next Session. It was a very complicated business, but it was necessary as a general background to housing provision, and in order to see that in future they did not go on building houses on areas that ought to be kept for open spaces or for the building of factories."

Manchester Guardian.

* * *

THIS ISSUE

We have tried to secure in this issue a "spread" of significant views on the social importance of planning, urban, rural and regional. There is nothing better in the planning field, the world over, than the Plan of Vancouver, and, concerned as we are, chiefly, with the advance of the Canadian planning movement, we have devoted considerable space to the exposition of the Vancouver plan. So long as the Vancouver City Council cripples the progress of planning in Vancouver the fact should be known, and the Vancouver newspapers, splendidly helpful to the planning movement and loyal to the Vancouver Town Planning Commission, may be trusted to make the fact known in Vancouver. We have quoted the comment of the *Vancouver Province*, always finely alert on this subject, to assist the readers of this journal to understand why there is not more progress in town planning in Canada. There are few city councils in Canada awake to its importance and few city councils willing to let others lead where they themselves are falling down. The fact seems to be that the city councils in Canada are too big and unwieldy for real efficiency. The city manager idea is once more coming to the forefront.

Our President's conception of the relation of town planning to the economic life of the nation and to the crushing burden of taxation may not be unconnected with the fact that the provincial government of Ontario are undertaking an investigation into the whole subject of provincial taxation.

We have reprinted an article from the *British New Statesman* to show that regional planning in England is being considered by one of the leading

journals as the one new and original method in view for the relief of unemployment, and have quoted the intention of the British Minister of Health to exercise every opportunity of his future career to advance town and regional planning in England.

* * *

TOWN PLANNING ON THE AIR—UKRANIAN SPEAKER

The Alberta Provincial Town and Rural Planning Advisory Board at Edmonton have put town

planning "on the air" in a "Better Communities Half Hour." A programme of music and vernacular speaking is an interesting feature of the project. The Chairman of the Town Planning Commission of Vegreville and of the Horticultural Society is an Ukranian, well able and willing to address his compatriots on the advantage of scientific planning and planting and the personal and community value of the cultivation of beauty in home and farm surroundings.

A Plan for the City of Vancouver, British Columbia

By J. ALEXANDER WALKER,

Engineer-Secretary, Vancouver Town Planning Commission

Probably nowhere on this continent has the idea of town planning taken such a firm hold on the imagination of the citizens, nor has the actual preparation of a town plan been carried out with such despatch and energy, as in Vancouver, British Columbia.

True it is that since about 1912 there have been sporadic outbursts of oratory, editorials and newspaper correspondence, all urging the municipal and provincial authorities to enact legislation which would make the adoption of town planning principles compulsory. However, it remained for a small group of half a dozen members of the Town Planning Institute of Canada, residing in Vancouver, late in 1922 to take stock of the situation and to organize some concerted effort which would not be abortive as was the case of the former attempts.

Accordingly, this small group quietly set out to evolve a plan of action which, if soundness, perseverance, and energy were to count for anything, could not fail. They augmented their numbers by degrees until there were a score or more enthusiasts. Representations were made before the Vancouver City Council and the Provincial Government in an endeavor to induce the latter to pass a town planning act. In 1922, 1923 and 1924, a draft town planning bill was placed before the Legislature but each time the Government refused to take any action.

Finally in 1925, a new draft was prepared, the chief change being that the proposed act was made optional instead of compulsory. The Vancouver Branch of the Town Planning Institute of Canada, having increased its membership by this time to nearly two score, was in a much stronger position. A carefully prepared memorial, which for its persuasiveness and sound logic is considered a masterpiece, was sent to the Vancouver City Council. In addition, each municipality in the province and all the members of the Legislative Assembly were sent a

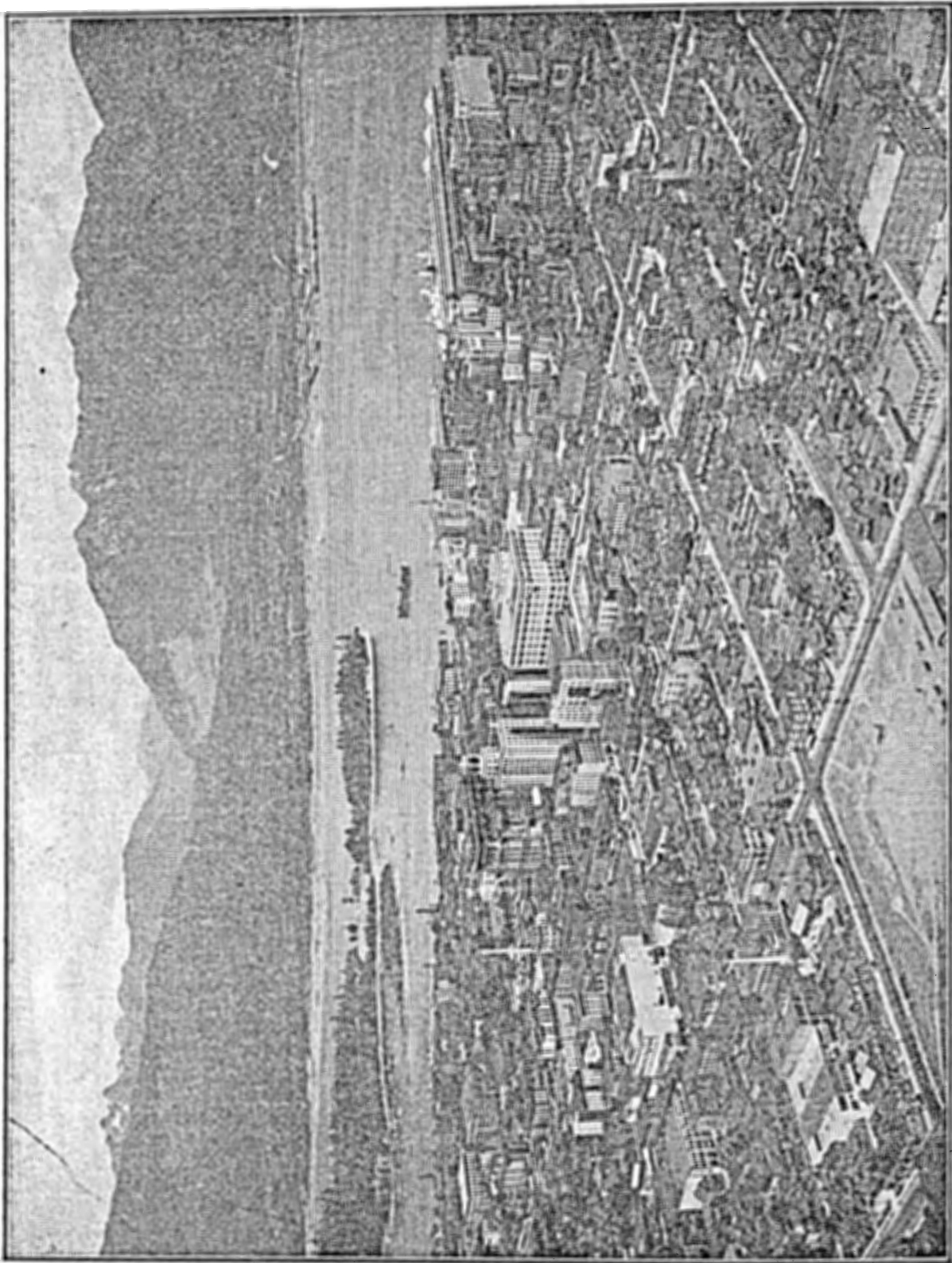
short concise circular letter reciting the Branch's request and soliciting their support. Later, further letters were sent to the Union of British Columbia Municipalities at its annual meeting and to each member of the Municipal Committee of the Legislature.

This City Council was so impressed by this propaganda of the need of town planning for the city that it provided a small amount of funds for, and appointed a Town Planning and Zoning Committee which included Council members and representative citizens. This Committee endorsed and advocated the proposed legislation and also prepared and compiled data against the time when a Commission, regularly appointed to operate under the provisions of the Act, could be created. Much of the material gathered was of great value later.

Late in the 1925 Session, the Vancouver City Council, after an impassioned appeal from the spokesmen of the Branch, decided to give the measure its unqualified support and it sent a delegation to Victoria to impress upon the Government the necessity of immediate action.

The bill was given its final reading on Friday, December 18, 1925, and "The Town Planning Act," Chapter 55, 1925, was placed upon the Statutes of British Columbia. The City of Vancouver lost no time in taking advantage of the enabling legislation, for on Monday, December 21, 1925, a member of the Council gave notice of motion in respect to a Town Planning By-law for the city. This by-law came into effect on February 1, 1926, and on March 1, 1926 the personnel of the Vancouver Town Planning Commission was announced.

The Vancouver Commission, in accordance with the Act, consists of nine members appointed by the Mayor and Council and five ex-officio members including the Mayor and the Chairman of the four main elected and appointed public bodies in the City. The personnel of the Commission is considered to be one of the best balanced bodies obtainable and



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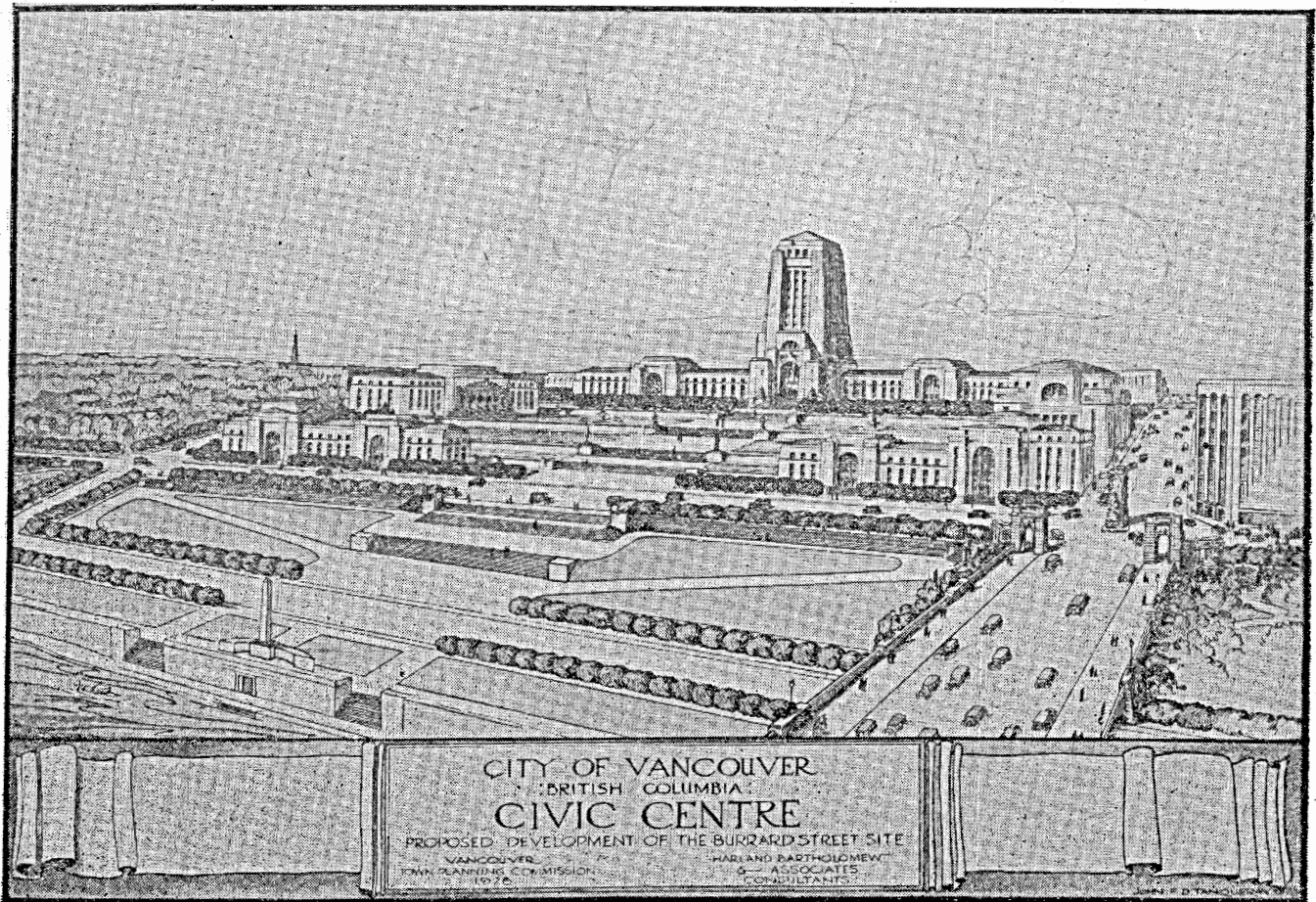
is has been fortunate in retaining the confidence of the citizens.

Arthur G. Smith, the Chairman since its inception, is a barrister by profession and is the Registrar of Titles for the Vancouver Land Registry Office. At one time he was Deputy Attorney-General for British Columbia, and in that capacity was responsible for many of the early statutes of the province.

Late in March, 1926, the Commission held its first meeting and soon completed its organization. Early in August, of the same year, the City Council, upon the advice of the Commission, retained Messrs.

to prepare a plan. Under the terms of the Vancouver contract the plan was to be regional in character in so far as major streets, transit, transportation, public recreation and pleasure drives were concerned, so that a considerable amount of planning was done in the municipalities of Point Grey, South Vancouver, Burnaby and to a small extent in the city of New Westminster.

With the closing of the year of 1928, the plan for Vancouver was completed to all intents and purposes. Mr. Seymour resigned to accept the appointment of Director of Town Planning for the Province



Harland Bartholomew and Associates, of Saint Louis, Missouri, as town planning consultants. Under the terms of the contract which was entered into, a comprehensive town plan was to be prepared within three years. Horace L. Seymour, a Canadian town planning engineer, was appointed as resident engineer by the consultants and the preparation of the comprehensive plan was immediately got under way.

Concurrently with the Vancouver work, the District of Point Grey, which had appointed a Commission, also retained the Bartholomew organization

of Alberta. The plan was presented to the City Council in the following March and the printed volume "A Plan for the City of Vancouver" appeared in July.

Coincident with the completion of the plan, on the first of January, 1929, the extension of the limits of the City of Vancouver by the amalgamation with the suburban municipalities of Point Grey and South Vancouver, which had been decided upon by joint vote a year previously, became effective. The former District of South Vancouver, however, was without

a town plan. The new City Council, early in 1929, then entered into another contract with the Bartholomew firm to undertake the planning in this area. The task was completed in September, 1929, and the only remaining unfinished business was to consolidate the zoning by-laws of the former City of Vancouver and the District of Point Grey.

Under the terms of the Amalgamation Act, the Town Planning Commissions of Point Grey and Vancouver were to continue to function in their respective spheres until a convenient occasion presented itself to disband so that a Commission representing the new greater city could be appointed. This time has arrived and a new Commission has just been appointed for Greater Vancouver. The chief function of this new Commission will be to carry out the town plan as formulated and to see that the execution of the plan as prepared, is not unduly delayed.

In the short space of less than four years since the passing of an Act creating the legal machinery for the preparation and putting into effect of a town plan, the City of Vancouver has made rapid strides indeed towards this end. It is the first city in the Dominion of Canada to undertake the preparation of a comprehensive plan covering all the elements usually associated with the modern town plan.

Vancouver, as is the portion of all cities, has its problems with their attendant difficulties but it has been fortunate in having a scientific diagnosis of the city's fundamental ailments made as soon as it did. The City was also fortunate in having a Commission the members of which have given of their time, experience and energy without stint.

A PLAN FOR VANCOUVER

The report presented under the above title contains chapters upon Major Streets, Transit, Transportation, including Railway and Harbor sections, Public Recreation and Civic Art.

It is prefaced by an introduction written by the chairman of the Commission, which takes the form of a history of the city. This history for authenticity and interest is unsurpassed.

The city was named in honor of Captain George Vancouver who landed on the present site of the city when cruising these western shores in 1793. The lower mainland of British Columbia first became settled in 1858 as a result of a gold rush to the interior of the province. On Burrard Inlet a small settlement sprang up in the '60's and about 1870, a few lots, along the waterfront, were surveyed and sold. The City of Vancouver became incorporated as such on May 6, 1886, but six weeks later, on June 13, it was completely obliterated by fire. It was rapidly rebuilt, however, and on May 23, 1887, the first through train from eastern Canada arrived at the Vancouver station.

Its expansion was very rapid and the sudden influx of population was the cause of the many cases of bad planning from which we now suffer. Nevertheless, in so far as its older portions are concerned, the City is fortunate in that the pioneer planners really planned very well indeed. Considering they could not foresee the invention and the extremely rapid development of the automobile, the street system of the down town portion of the city, with few exceptions, may be said to be very good.

MAJOR STREETS

The first studies undertaken by the Commission were devoted to the fundamental element of the town plan, a street system. These studies occupied a period of seven months and included the matter of population, past and present, with a forecast of the future, the trend of building development, the developed areas relative to paved streets and areas served by sewer and water. From a population of about a thousand in 1886, the first hundred thousand was reached about 1910 and upon amalgamation, Greater Vancouver had a population just under three hundred thousand. It is anticipated that the half million mark will be reached by 1940 and the million mark about 1960.

A comprehensive traffic count, covering the whole of the region, was undertaken early in 1927. The results of this traffic count were very illuminating. After many field studies, an arterial highway system was projected for the region and finally a major street system was developed.

Considerable discussion has taken place relative to the matter of setting building-lines on streets recommended for widening. This may be done under the City Charter or "The Town Planning Act." It was felt, however, that to set down all the building-lines at once under either of these statutes would place too great a burden upon the financial capacity of the city and, in order to avoid any trouble which might arise, Building-line Legislation, as an amendment to the Town Planning Act, is now under advisement. It is anticipated that, under this proposed legislation, the building-lines may be set down over the entire city in such a manner that, on the one hand, there will be no compensation paid until the City makes entry on the land and, on the other hand, the property owners will not suffer any undue hardship.

A complete analysis of the city in respect to development abutting the streets proposed for widening was made. In the major street plan for the greater City of Vancouver, it was found there are 225 miles of streets designated as major streets. Of this mileage, 105 miles will not require any widening, 101 miles will require widening and there are approximately 19 miles of new connections, chiefly diagonal highways through undeveloped property.

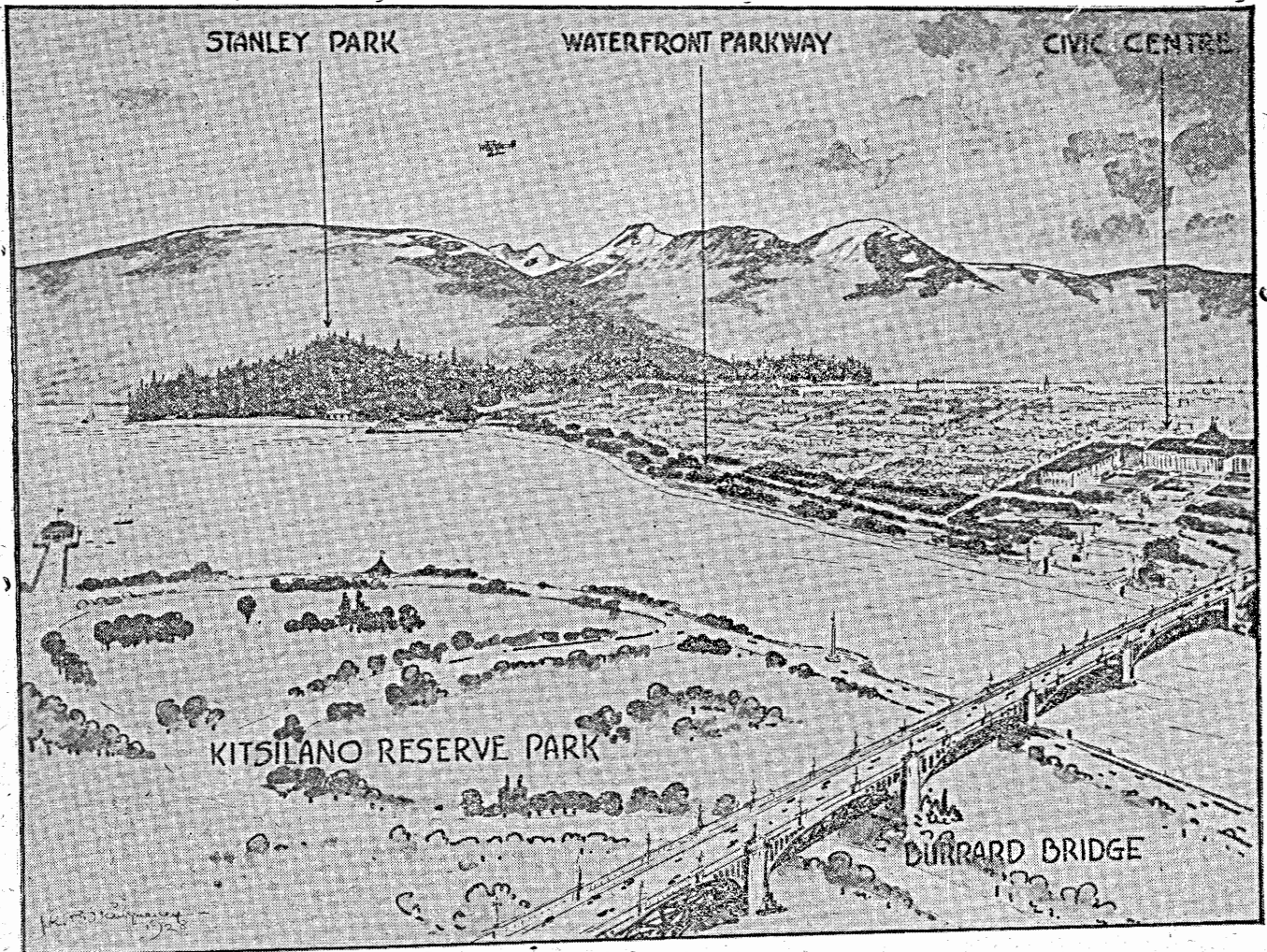
Only 4.12 miles of abutting property are in the main business district and about 7 miles of abutting property are in outlying business districts.

In considering this analysis, it was an agreeable surprise to ascertain that even in the down-town business district, a very small percentage of abutting property was heavily developed.

In connection with the major street report, certain "Legislation Relating to Subdivisions" and

Keeping abreast of the modern trend of transit this company also operates bus lines, not only as feeders for the city and suburban lines, but also for inter-urban use.

A study of the present street railway system having been made, it was found that many lines were being used over intensively and others insufficiently. As a result of careful study and analysis of all the factors involved, recommendations, if and when, carried out, would serve until the city's population



"Rules to be adopted regarding the Subdivision of Land" were suggested and are recited in detail in the appendices of the report.

In regard to transit, Vancouver and its environs are fortunate in the fact that they have a unified service. The British Columbia Electric Railway Company supplies the city and all the smaller cities and settlements on the lower mainland with transportation and electrical energy for light and power.

reached the half million mark. An intermediate program to be adopted when the population reached 500,000 and an ultimate program when the population is approaching 1,000,000 were also outlined. These recommendations, especially those of the more remote periods, advocate the construction of many miles of new tracks but the re-routing of cars on old lines and the use of bus lines, in the outskirts of the city, form a considerable portion of these programs.

TRANSPORTATION

The harbor and railways are treated under the heading of "Transportation."

The port of Vancouver is one of the outstanding harbors of the world. This harbor is Vancouver's greatest single asset and is an essential link in the railway and shipping lines of Canada. The control of the harbor is vested in the Dominion Government which is represented by the Vancouver Harbor Commission. The growth of the port has been pheno-



A Point Grey Street.

menal, especially since the completion of the Panama Canal. There is a wonderful diversity of cargo handled in and out of this port which is a stabilizing factor to the port business and it also has a beneficial influence upon the commercial life of the city. Grain may be considered the leading cargo, but lumber, fish, flour, fruit and minerals compose the chief exports. A great fund of information pertaining to the harbor is given in the report including the tonnage of shipping, the commodities handled, both import and export, and a host of other material.

Plans showing the potential use of the harbor and waterfront development, both of the north and south shore of the harbor are given. The report advises that every foot of the harbor should be carefully preserved for harbor purposes and that its uses be restricted to those industries to which water frontage is essential.

The general transportation studies took in the north shore area, where an immense amount of space is available for water front development and industries and though not within the city limits, is an integral part of the harbor.

The greatest and most important problem in respect to the City of Vancouver, is the proper development of False Creek, a tide flat which with the harbor creates the peninsula which comprises the central business district. Definite recommendations and plans for this development are given in the

report. This important project is now receiving the attention of the civic authorities as it is realized that the regeneration of this inland arm of the sea is essential to the normal and proper growth of the city.

Vancouver, by reason of its strategic and unrivalled location, is a national asset; it is the immediate seaport of a great hinterland abounding in natural resources which have, for the most part, been merely touched; it is at the cross-roads of transoceanic and trancontinental shipping.

By reason of the many shipping and railway lines focusing here, Vancouver functions as a primary unit in the economic structure of the Dominion of Canada. It is the western terminus of two Canadian transportation lines, the Canadian Pacific Railway and the Canadian National Railway. It is also the terminus of a branch of the Great Northern Railway from the South. It is the opinion of the Commission and also of the City Council to a great extent that there should be a spirit of co-operation among the various authorities concerned in the development of Vancouver rail and harbor facilities along the lines suggested by the specific plan which has been recommended.

Concerning the railways, definite recommendations are made, in chief, the formation of a terminal railway which would eliminate the present unsystematic switching arrangements and the consequent excessive intra-terminal switching charges, and the creation of more convenient freight classification yards. Union passenger terminals are also recommended for consideration.



Zoning now prohibits this kind of thing.

PUBLIC RECREATION

The report on this branch, which is regional in scope, covers the old municipalities of Point Grey and South Vancouver, as well as the city proper. There are many plans showing the types and location of the various kinds of parks, playgrounds and play-

fields and elementary and high schools. The proper distribution of these and recommendations for the acquisition of suitably located areas for park purposes are given.

A series of pleasure drives or boulevards, connecting the park system of the city and the contiguous territory, are recommended along with the



Bad Boulevard Planting. Lack of Systematic Control

steps which should be taken for the proper development of Vancouver's great heritage of bathing beaches and beautiful shore line.

In addition to recommendations for the acquisition of certain areas, unsuitable for home-site development, as mountain parks or alpine playgrounds, the acquisition of the foreshore of English Bay for park and boulevard purposes, is strongly recommended. Since the printing of the report, the citizens have approved of a money by-law for the purchase of two blocks out of seven of waterfront property along Beach Avenue for this specific purpose.

CIVIC ART

Suggestions for the conservation of the natural beauties of the city are made in the chapter dealing with civic art. The design of streets and the control of overhead wires, signs and billboards and other disfiguring features all receive comment. Hints for the improvement of the home grounds and the treatment which should be accorded vacant lots are also included.

At the special request of the City Council, the consultants were invited to report and suggest a location for a Civic Centre for Vancouver. Although a plebiscite had been taken on several sites a few year ago and a down-town site had been the favorite, an entirely new site was recommended. This site is immediately adjacent to the business district and will be at the head of the Burrard Street bridge, construction of which is just being commenced. The site will be within ten minutes walk from the leading hotels and its immediate surroundings are all of a low residential character. The ground has a maximum elevation of 190 feet and the site will have a marvelous outlook upon English Bay and upon a large portion of the existing city.

The industrial area will be screened from the immediate neighborhood of the site by the construction of the aforementioned bridge. There are remarkably fine opportunities here for the development of a superb group of magnificent public buildings which could be fitted into this setting in a manner probably unsurpassed in this or any other country.

ZONING

The City of Vancouver had reached a stage in its development which was so disorderly that many fine residential districts were being invaded by improper uses, such as stores, apartments, laundries and factories. The apartment house was the worst offender and the City Council was called upon to give so much of its time in pacifying homeowners that it was realized that steps must be taken as soon as possible to correct these conditions.

It is probable for this reason that the advent of scientific town planning was more easily accomplished than for any other. When the consultants were appointed, the City Council requested them to prepare a temporary zoning by-law to protect single dwelling areas from invasion. An Interim Zoning



Bad Street Planting.

By-law, therefore, passed on February 5, 1927. This by-law divided the city into three classifications, single-family dwellings, apartments and unrestricted districts. After the major street plan, and the transit and transportation reports had been prepared, a comprehensive Zoning By-law which was co-ordinated with the other phases of the plan, was approved by the City Council on December 17, 1928.



Good Street Planting.

In preparing the zoning regulations and in the division of the city into districts due consideration was given to:

- (a) The promotion of public health, safety, convenience and welfare.
- (b) The prevention of the overcrowding of land and the preservation of the amenity of residential districts.
- (c) The securing of adequate provisions for light, air and reasonable access.
- (d) The value of the land and the nature of its uses and occupancy.
- (e) The character of each district, the character of the buildings already erected and the peculiar suitability of the district for particular uses.
- (f) The conservation of property values and the direction of building development.

Under the provisions of the comprehensive zoning by-law, there are ten classifications or use districts, combining in one map the appropriate use, height and bulk and area provisions.

- A. One-family Dwelling District
- B. Two-family Dwelling District
- C. Three-storey Multiple Dwelling District
- D. Six-storey Multiple Dwelling District
- E. Local Commercial District
- F. Three-storey Commercial District
- G. Six-storey Commercial District
- H. Six-storey Light Industrial District

I. General Business District

J. Heavy Industrial District

In the brief period in which the zoning by-law has been in force, the development which has taken place in some of the use districts has been remarkable. Formerly apartment houses were built, with few exceptions, on corner lots in good residential districts and usually covered 100 percent of the lot. Now it is seen that entire blocks are being covered with multiple dwellings. The interior lot has been almost as favored as the corner lots owing to the front, side, rear yard and site area requirements.

It would appear that Vancouver's experience in respect to the value of zoning is such that a reversion to the conditions obtaining before zoning restrictions were imposed would not for a moment be tolerated.

Under the provisions of the Town Planning Act, a Zoning Board of Appeal has been established in the City of Vancouver. This board consists of three: one appointed by the City Council, one by the Provincial Government and a third appointed by the other appointees, who acts as chairman.

Appeal shall lie in the following cases:

- (a) By any person who is dissatisfied with the decision of any official charged with the enforcement of a zoning by-law.
- (b) By any person desiring to obtain the benefit of any exception contained in a zoning by-law.
- (c) By any person claiming that owing to special conditions the literal enforcement of a zoning by-law would result in unnecessary hardship.
- (d) In any other cases where provision for appeal is made by a zoning by-law.

The Board of Appeal must adhere to the spirit of the by-law but may make such relaxations as special cases call for, and endeavor to see that substantial justice is done and that the interests of any individual are not unduly or unnecessarily sacrificed for the benefit of the community.



Foreshore development, Montreux, Switzerland.

EXECUTION OF THE PLAN

Following a treatise on the Execution of the Plan by the consultants, the report concludes with a definite program for the execution of the Vancouver Plan. This program is divided into two periods: from the present date to 1940 and from 1940 to 1960.



The Kind of Building no longer allowed.

About this date it is anticipated that the population will have reached the million mark. For each of these periods the program is divided into two parts: one enumerating the projects involving little or no expenditure of public funds and the other, projects involving larger expenditure of public funds.



Modern row building—plenty of light.

CONCLUSIONS

The reception which has been given to this plan on the part of the civic authorities, the executives of large corporations in the city, the press and the citizens in general, lead us to believe that it will continue to be regarded as a vital and practical factor in the development of Vancouver for many years.

The Commission hopes that it has prepared these plans "for action, not the archives."

Although a vast amount of work was done by the former Commission in the preparation and publication of the Plan, the new Commission has a very important task ahead of it. The City Council cannot be expected to carry out the plan if the general public are not sympathetic and the new Commission should realize that to function properly and to carry out its duties, it must be in a position to advise the public about the town plan and about any specific project. The Commission must furnish leadership and create public understanding of the many problems dealt with in the Town Plan.

THOROUGHFARE PLAN FOR BOSTON

"Some way must be found to modernize our system of major traffic streets", says the Boston City Planning Board, in an introduction to a "Report on a Thoroughfare Plan for Boston," just published in a handsome volume of 236 pages. The City of Boston does not leave the matter at the end of a sigh. In 1927 the City Planning Board, composed of men and women of rich technical, administrative and social experience, with Mr. Robert Whitten as city planning consultant, were commissioned to find the way "to modernize our system of major traffic streets" and to present a report. Some work had been already done by various agencies. This work has neither been ignored nor "cast as rubbish to the void", as is the frequent custom with cities that have paid hard cash for elaborate plans and then forgotten all about them. It has been intelligently utilized and its authors credited and the completed plan has been correlated with "other phases of the physical development of the city" and has "been considered as a part of a larger system of metropolitan and state highways and parkways", in short, of a regional plan.

The result is a volume which outlines the traffic improvements necessary in a programme for the next twenty-five years. It is abundantly illustrated. It takes the public into confidence. It is not addressed to a small conclave of experts but to the average citizen. Its purpose is not only to find a solution to an urgent problem but "to prevent by equitable means the blocking of projects contained in the plan by the erection of costly buildings within the limits of streets laid down thereon." It is pointed out that money on such projects will be spent inevitably, plan or no plan, and that it will cost no more to make improvements on the lines of a scientific and comprehensive plan than after the traditional method of isolated and unrelated projects, which often turn out to be exceedingly expensive mistakes.

NEW LAMPS FOR OLD IN WESTERN CANADA

New Methods of Urban Land Development are Imperatively Needed in Western Canada.—The Social Cost of Past and Present Methods—The Planning of Towns has become a Stern Economic Necessity—Bad Planning means Oppressive Taxation and Economic Disaster.

By A. G. DALZELL, M.E.I.C.

President of the Town Planning Institute of Canada *

THE AGRICULTURAL PROBLEM

The rapid and perplexing change in the economic position of the rural population of the prairie provinces of Canada has upset many plans for national progress and development. For the time the lure of Canadian land has almost vanished. Even the subtle and magnetic pull of the Peace River area, which has steadily drawn men further west and further north has waned. Fertility is futile when crops cannot be marketed.

The long cherished dream of many that the surplus population of Great Britain could be readily absorbed in Canada began to fade with the unsatisfactory ending of the harvesters' excursion for the British unemployed. Recent deportations to Great Britain have intensified the bad impression of the harvesters, and undone the expensive advertising propaganda of railways and governments. Advertisements may be read once or twice but a deported person is a living and talking advertisement for years.

In Canada itself, the native-born population contributes only about seven percent, as farm owners and operators, and the drift of the population from rural to urban areas, persistent even in times of rural prosperity, has been accelerated in the decade. The census of the prairie provinces in 1926 classified nearly 44 per cent. of the people of Manitoba as urban residents, as compared with less than 28 per cent. in 1901. When the Dominion census of the present year is completed it will without doubt show that the people who reside in urban areas far outnumber those engaged in agriculture or living on the land.

The problems of the agriculturist at the present time are very great, but they will not be lessened by ignoring the problems of the greater number who are classified as urban workers. Diversified farming, so freely recommended as one solution of the rural problem, depends for success to a great extent on a good home market, and so the lot of the worker on the land is bound up with the lot of the industrial worker and the urban dweller.

The immediate problem in many Canadian communities, and in western Canada especially, is the necessity of providing employment other than that of cultivating the soil. Through the unexampled

generosity of citizens as individuals, and the co-operation of municipal, provincial and federal authorities, the difficulties of the winter months have been largely overcome.

But the problem will not end with the melting of the snow. And it will now be difficult to say to the men needing work in the spring that there is plenty of work to be found on the land. Many farmers accustomed to hiring help will have to do without. Few will be inclined to increase the acreage cultivated. Diversified farming will absorb more labour but it will only be as stocks are built up by natural increase.

Work must be soon found for many, and it must be work of a different character from that found to meet the lesser emergencies of past years. If possible it must be found by the establishment of new or the enlargement of existing industries.

The fact needs to be driven home with all the force possible, that the plans that need to be promoted are the plans that will facilitate the progress and success of business and industry at the present day; and not plans for providing for a population and a business that may come in some distant day, prepared and willing to meet the overhead charges such as past plans and policies have imposed. What those plans and policies have been may be briefly outlined.

THE LURE OF WEALTH WITHOUT WORK—MISUSE OF LAND

The towns and cities of western Canada do not owe their origin to the prior establishment of industries attracting a population by assuring a means of living. And not many are in a difficult position at the present time through the failure of any major industry. Most have developed from pioneer settlements or trading posts by the building of railways and the conversion of the prairie into farming land.

At first they were mainly receiving and distributing centers for the goods required by settlers and for the crops they produced. When the possibilities of growth were realized, the dominating motive for stimulating growth and development was not the attraction of a new population by the provision of industries to employ workers, but to show to many the possibilities of securing wealth without work.

A homestead of 160 acres on the borders of a town might be worth as farm land \$20 an acre. But

* Reprinted from Toronto Saturday Night.

by the expenditure of a similar sum on surveyors' plans and stakes the homestead could be converted into 1500 building lots to sell at \$2000 an acre. Few industries could show such returns so quickly with such little labour. And so urban limits were enlarged to take in from 10 to 40 square miles of farm lands. Square mile after square mile was subdivided to provide 6000 lots to the square mile, or adequate for 25,000 people, without the reservation of a square yard for any specific industrial purpose or public use.

As municipal authorities were mainly composed of men interested in these promotion schemes they were aided by systems of assessment and taxation to increase land values and facilitate sales. One small municipality maintained an assessment of \$3,306,980 when the Provincial Equalization Assessment Board said that \$328,500 was a fair valuation. A city with less than 20,000 people having an area of $15\frac{1}{4}$ square miles once declared by its municipal assessment that the value of the land was such that taking the whole area, including streets, river bottom, and unusable land, the average value for the whole was \$4,512 an acre.

Since the end of the war the London County Council has bought six freehold and partially improved housing estates having a total area equal to one-third of that Canadian city, and the average purchase price was less than \$1300 an acre. And all the land was within 11 miles of Charing Cross, and surrounded by seven million urban residents.

Along with this speculation in land came the promotion of public works to facilitate speculation, to increase land values, and to provide employment for those who had sunk their capital in unproductive land. *Saturday Night* in its issue of July 23rd, 1921, in an article entitled "Cities That Go Broke" gave many instances of extravagant expenditures on public works.

One instance was of a town with a population of 1500 where over \$100 per head of population was spent on waterworks and sewerage with only forty consumers connected to the mains. The same town embarked on an electric lighting scheme and employed in its operation a superintendent at \$185 a month, two engineers at \$140 a month, a third at \$120 a month, a bookkeeper and meter reader at \$100 a month, two firemen and one coal and ash handler at 50 cents per hour. Assuming 300 services connected, that pay roll alone entailed a charge of \$4 per month per service.

EXTRAVAGANT PUBLIC WORKS AND OPPRESSIVE TAXATION

In the larger cities expenditures were carried on to a large scale. One city with 250,000 building lots, had in 1914 over one-tenth of those lots served with graded streets, sewer and water services, yet

vacant and returning no revenue. Nine years after the war ended the same city was in possession of one-third of the building lots, and 4 square miles of acreage, and the business and industry now carried on in the city has to carry the burdens that the speculators imposed but quickly dropped when their scheme failed.

It will not be denied that many in some branches of business and industry prospered by land speculation and the promotion of public works speculation entailed. But there is a limit to which subdivisions can be extended, a limit to which owners of vacant and unproductive land will agree to taxation, and when that limit has been reached, business and industry must be carried on with other objectives.

It is then soon realized that high land values and high taxes imposed by costly and extravagant public works have to be met by overhead charges on business and industry, and so there comes the frequent demand for exemptions and concessions. If exemptions are conceded then the burden must be carried by others, the cost of living for the ordinary man is increased, and the value of money paid in wages is reduced.

It should now be obvious to most people that there is no early prospect of further extensive agricultural development in Canada or a larger number employed on the land in the prairie provinces. There is no immediate prospect of extensive immigration to build up urban communities. There is therefore no need to continue subdivisions of land, when only one lot in 12 is built upon.

There are also many dangers to be avoided in the promotion of public works mainly to provide employment. Too much consideration has been given to fostering growth and expansion. Growth cannot be healthy unless sustained by proper food. Expansion can be carried to the bursting point. What is needed to-day is consolidation, the utmost made out of what is already possessed.

SCIENTIFIC PLANNING AN ECONOMIC NECESSITY

If industries are to thrive in urban areas then these areas must be planned to serve industries, and to secure the utmost for the welfare of the industrial worker upon whose character and quality the success of the industry so greatly depends. This cannot be secured by imposing burdens for other and quite alien motives.

A million or more industrial workers in Russia have laid down a definite policy for industrial and agricultural development. They have so far succeeded in enforcing that policy on nearly one-twelfth of the population of the world. Hated and distasteful as that policy may be to other nationalities, it has already had a tremendous effect on the agricultural workers of many nations as the people of Canada now realize.

What the effect will be on the industrial workers

of the world in the next year or so who can tell? We can neither neglect the challenge of Russian nor other European nations, nor overlook what they are doing to get a share of the markets of the world.

Our friendly but aggressive neighbours are sending their emissaries out to see what is doing. One, an engineer executive of one of the larger engineering organizations of the United States is reported as saying:

"Among the outstanding impressions obtained from my trip was the energy with which the people of Europe are attacking such problems as city planning, industrial housing, and improvement of industrial and commercial conditions. A vast amount of research and development work in progress in these countries is taking form in new products and new types of construction from which we can learn much."

In a recent issue of *Power*, a United States journal, an article appeared in which it was pointed out that the United States could not within its own borders provide the panacea for its business ailments, past, present, and future. Foreign markets had to be sought, and the article went on to say:—

"With comparatively few exceptions the industrial countries of Europe are already in a dominating position in the foreign markets. They are consolidating their positions during the present period of general dullness. They are equipping old factories with new machinery to reduce costs. They are 'rationalizing' as it is called.

"Plants long since amortized are being swept bodily from the line of battle. Industries, be they exporters or otherwise, must heed these signs if they wish to secure their share of the world's business or continue to enjoy a good market at home.

"It is equally true that these international influences will have their effect upon the prices in our home market as well as abroad, for, as they limit our factory production, they bring about unemployment and decrease local buying power.

"It follows directly that industry must find ways to decrease the cost of its products for home consumption as well as for export. Those concerns which recognize this and take advantage of the present lull to put their houses in order by eliminating waste, redesigning processes of manufacture and replacing obsolete equipment will get the business. Industry in other countries is doing just this."

The industrial leaders of Canada, either as individuals or collectively, have not taken a marked interest in municipal administration. If, however, they cannot see at this stage of the growth of the Dominion that there is a great need to change the plans and policies that have prevailed in municipal administration in western Canada in the past, then they must be prepared to accept the results of those plans and policies.

No more should be heard about fixed assessments, exemptions from taxation, or any concessions in charges for public services, if the present plans and policies are right. Whatever any industry directly gains from any such privileges is directly offset by the heavier imposition on the ordinary taxpayer, and the impression that is created that industries thrive on the people, instead of the people thriving through the industry.

There is an urgent need at the present day for a start in town planning that goes far deeper than the correction of street defects to facilitate traffic, or the provision for parks and recreation. Such planning is undoubtedly necessary because the needs of traffic, of parks and playgrounds, were not considered in the original subdivisions. But far more essential is the planning of urban communities to facilitate the earning of a living, to make it easier to get industries established and to prosper when they are established.

And this goes much farther than the mere provision of industrial sites. Communities must be planned so as to reduce the cost of living if the competition of other nations has to be met. If "rationalizing" is needed in industry, it is more urgently needed in the environment of industry. This planning will not, however, be effective until some better understanding is arrived at regarding the real value of land, and until methods of assessment and taxation which have helped to sustain false value have been changed. To the methods of assessment that have prevailed in the past attention will now be drawn.

THE ASSESSMENT OF URBAN LAND FOR TAXATION PURPOSES *

My interest in the taxation of land is primarily that of an engineer; its economic aspect; and secondly that of a sociologist; its social aspect. It is, therefore, my purpose to draw attention to some of the economic and social results which methods of assessing urban lands that have prevailed in Canada have helped to bring about. It will be admitted that the principles and methods of assessment which have prevailed in Western Canada, and which I have more particularly in mind, are based more on those that are common in the United States than those of Great Britain. It is, therefore, reasonable to take a definition of property value as given by a competent authority in the United States.

The Supreme Court of the United States once defined the value of property in this way:—

The value of property results from the use to which it is put, and varies with the profitability of that use, present and prospective, actual

* Contributed to the last Canadian National Tax Conference and published in the proceedings by the Citizens' Research Institute of Canada.

and anticipated. There is no pecuniary value outside that which results from such use. The amount and profitable character of such use determines value.

Generally speaking, the land that is used for urban purposes has some value previous to that use, either for the purposes of agriculture, arboriculture, or horticulture. If land is valued for its mineral content, that may have some effect on its value for urban purposes, but as so few Canadian communities are affected by the value of mineral wealth under urban land, this factor need not be considered.

It is commonly recognized that the pecuniary value of farm land depends upon the use to which it can be put. Present use may only include grazing, a higher use may include grain growing or the production of root crops. Prospective use may

that by far the largest number of holders of this vacant land anticipate that they in turn will sell not to the actual user, but to someone else with a higher estimate of the present worth of its future utility.

METHODS OF ASSESSMENT HELP TO CREATE HIGH LAND VALUES

Throughout Canada, at various times, there have been many instances of abnormal increases in the value of land. It is, however, contended that these do not justify the widespread high values of vacant urban land which have prevailed in the past, and which still persist in many areas. High land values are often regarded as a sign of real wealth. But it must not be overlooked that *they constitute an overhead charge on every form of production, on the cost of conducting every kind of business and industry, and on the cost of living; even of that of the humblest citizen.* That methods of assessment for taxation that have prevailed in the past have had something to do with the creation and maintenance of high land values it is our purpose to show by actual examples.

Our first illustration is from British Columbia. In the year 1881 a private citizen secured from the Crown, for the consideration of one dollar an acre, the grant of an area of 415 acres of logged-off land two miles south of the shore of Vancouver Harbour. In 1885, before the city of Vancouver was defined or incorporated, this land was fully subdivided for urban purposes into 2373 lots of varying size. The land had been heavily timbered, and the cost of clearing for either agriculture or urban use, varied from \$300 to \$500 an acre, according to the purchasing power of the dollar. With the exception of a few settlers who cleared and cultivated small areas, this land remained as second growth forest land for a quarter of a century. But during all that time the land was subject to speculation on account of prospective urban use, though, on account of failure to pay taxes, much of it reverted to the provincial government, always to be again placed on the market without reservations.

Twenty years after the subdivision was made an Irish immigrant paid for a lot in the center of the area, 49½ ft. frontage, 122 ft. depth, the sum of \$450. His wage was then \$3 a day, and assuming that he averaged five days a week at work, this site for his cottage represented his labour from the first of January to the end of July. Assuming that he paid on the prevailing system it is probable that the site cost him equivalent to a full year's earnings.

In 1912, twenty-seven years after subdivision, this land became part of the city of Vancouver. The few streets had been cleared and rough graded, a few plank sidewalks laid, but there were no public utilities except electric light supplied by a private

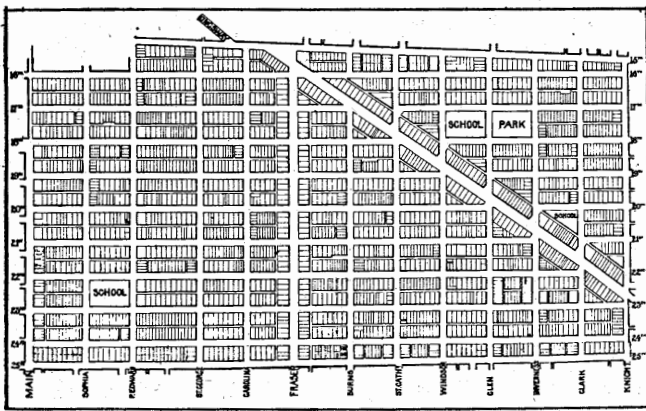


Figure One

Subdivision of land made before the City of Vancouver was incorporated and outside of municipal area for 26 years. The School and Park sites shown were bought after incorporation. The Park site cost, including loan expenses, \$16,616 per acre. Population on ground at incorporation 3,300.

include a more intensive cultivation, such as truck or fruit farming when transit facilities are improved, or population increases nearer the land. But some farm land, and even some land that is worthless for grazing only, may acquire a value when it produces nothing and returns no revenue, because it is deemed to have some prospective use for urban purposes. In this case the value of the property is not the present use to which it is put, but the present worth of its future utility.

It will hardly be denied that by far the largest amount of vacant urban land throughout the Dominion, at this time unproductive and returning no revenue, is held by those who do not themselves intend to put it to any actual use, but expect to sell to someone else. It may even be admitted

corporation. Out of the 2,373 lots in the area 901 were utilized in some way, 856 by the homes of average wage earners. In the first year of annexation the land value of the Irishman's lot was assessed for taxation at \$975, equivalent to \$7,031 an acre, and the assessment of land value for the whole area averaged over \$10,000 an acre, for every acre available for building. In 1929 the assessed value of the immigrant's lot was \$950, and for the whole area was probably greater, but owing to change in assessment areas, is difficult to secure.

It will thus be seen that by inclusion within urban limits, land without any public improvements, water supply or sewage system, on the prospective value of a site for a working man's home had risen to such an extent that, because of the time required to save the money, it might represent at least two

of six months. In an area where land had been subdivided sufficient for a population equal to one-fourth the entire dominion, is there any justification for assessment at such a value for land used as a site for a working man's home?

OVER ESTIMATING LAND VALUE MAY EVENTUALLY DESTROY THE VALUE

That it is possible, by the "boosting" of assessment values to secure revenue for immediate purposes, so to raise land values that they reach a point where they threaten the economic stability of a community, can be illustrated by an example from the province of Alberta.

Within the city of Calgary there is a parcel of 160 acres of land, which is legally defined as the S.W. $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 2, Twp. 24, Range 1, west of the fifth Meridian. On the Dominion government map of this township published in 1895, this quarter section is shown as in the possession of a settler, one quarter of the area is plotted as a marsh, about another quarter as a hilly slope, and a very insignificant area as cultivated. The town of Calgary was incorporated in 1884, one year after the railway was put through, and this quarter section is within two and a half miles of the Calgary station. In 1910 the land was brought within city limits. On annexation the owner asked that the land be assessed as farm land at \$50 an acre, provision being made in the city charter for assessment on this basis. This was refused and an assessment of \$1,100 an acre decided upon. Appeal was made to the courts. Evidence was submitted that a fair value as farm land was \$30 an acre, and that a rental of \$50 per annum for the 160 acres had been obtained for grazing privileges. Possibly some better use of this land for farming might have been made, but the fact that for at least 15 years before annexation, and 20 years after annexation, it was used for grazing is surely indication that its value as farm land was not very great.

Notwithstanding the evidence submitted, the Supreme Court sustained the assessment of the city at \$176,000. With this legal sanction no criticism of the assessors or the municipal administrators is justified. In citing the examples here given it is not for the purpose of blaming officials, but for drawing attention to the failings of a system, which we believe have not yet been fully realized.

It is obvious that by an assessment of \$1,100 an acre some use other than farm land was contemplated, and that this must have been use for some urban purpose. Was it, and is it wise, by raising assessment values in the effort to obtain revenue, to force urban development before it is actually needed?

Recall the position of the city of Calgary when this assessment was made. The area of the city included 40 sections of land, but as some of these

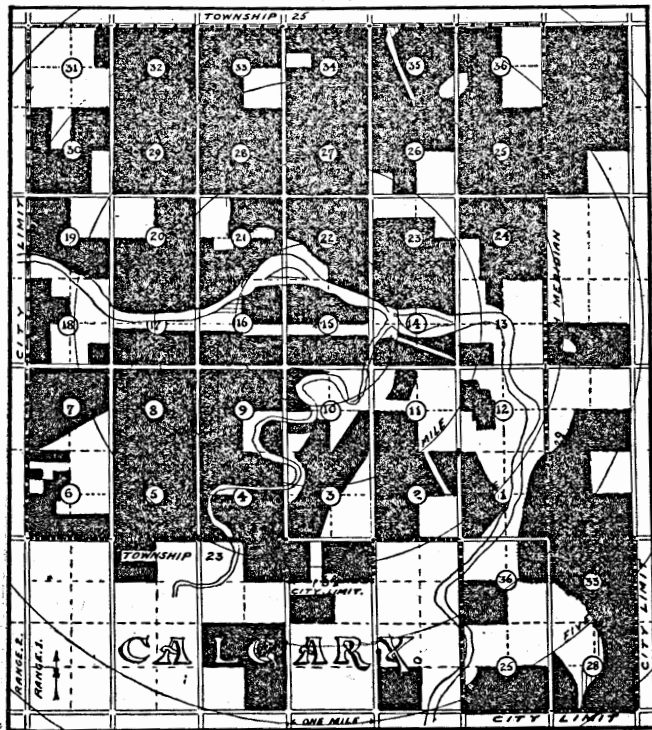


Figure Two

Subdivided land over 56 square miles in and around the City of Calgary as planned in 1912. See Figure 3 for illustration of one result of this excessive subdivision.

full years' labour of the homeseeker. In contrast it may be stated that in the present year, in the carefully supervised housing estates of the city of Birmingham, a city with nearly a million people, the cost of the land for the site of a home, including all street improvements, is equivalent in cash value to the earnings of a man just sufficient to maintain a fair standard of living for a family of five (Rowntree standard, £2.14s.6d. a week) for a period

were not of standard size the area is officially given as 25,368 acres. A map published in the same year shows 16 quarter sections within city limits untouched by subdivisions, but it also shows 24 quarter sections just outside the city limits more or less fully subdivided. It is thus a fair approximation to make that some 40 square miles of land were already subdivided for a population which did not exceed 70,000 (1921 census, 63,305). By the standard subdivisions common throughout the west it is possible to get about 6,000 building lots to the square mile, so that in and around the city there might have been 240,000 lots available before the land in question

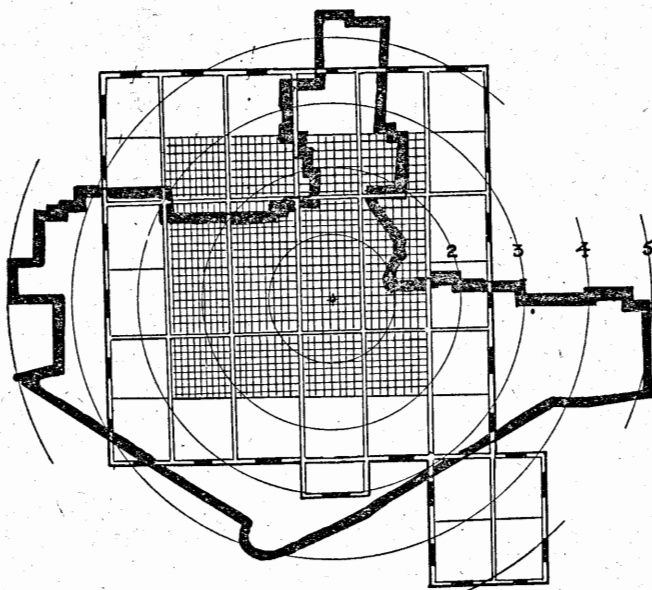


Figure Three

Scale Diagram. Outline of the plan of the City of Toronto with Harbour and Island (Pop. 1921 census 521,893) imposed on plan of the City of Calgary (Pop. 1921, 63,305) Centre of mile circles from Yonge and Bloor St. in Toronto, and Centre St. and Eight Avenue in Calgary. The shaded area shows approximate area (not location) of land abandoned by the former owners up to the end of 1926.

was subdivided. This estimate is confirmed by a statement of the land department of the city of Calgary, that at the end of 1926 there were 225,000 lots within city limits, notwithstanding that some subdivisions had been cancelled. Either on the basis of the number of lots provided or on the assumption that 40 square miles of urban land can safely carry a population with an average density of 26 to the acre, as in Toronto, provision had already been made for ten times the population then on the land.

That first assessment of \$1,100 an acre produced an assumed revenue of \$200, small as compared with the assumed value of the land, but far more than the land returned from the use to which it was put. But because government authorities could see such

prospective value in this land, it was possible to convince an English investor that there was still greater prospective value, and the land was sold for \$249,000 or \$1,556 an acre. Apparently this justified an increase in assessment the next year to \$2,000 an acre, though on purchase price, a tax of \$600 and five per cent. interest on principal, the land represented a value of \$1,637 an acre. Obviously this mounting assessment on unsubdivided land necessitated some prompt use, and a subdivision plan was made converting the area into 1,465 lots of 25 ft. frontage. Because over 30% of the area then became public property as streets and lanes, the assessment was changed in 1914 to \$285,240 or approximately \$2,500 an acre of building land. Here again city assessment at high land values only helped sales at still higher prices, and it is recorded that some lots were sold for \$350, which is equivalent to \$14 a front foot, or \$4,900 an acre. *And this for bare prairie land before a single improvement had taken place.*

At the end of the year 1918, taxes and costs on this property amounted to \$28,264.72, and rather than force a sale, a compromise was made with the owners for the sum of \$4,781.25, including taxes to the end of 1919. But even though the assessment was reduced to \$60 an acre, it was impossible to hold this land for urban use, and it was sold to cattle dealers for grazing. From 1924 to 1930 the assessment has stood at \$40 an acre, and the taxes in 1930 amounted to \$139.

It is only fair to say that this inflated land value is by no means peculiar to the city of Calgary. It is typical of what has been common in the west, and is not unknown in some parts of Ontario. In Edmonton, which in 1913 had an area, population, and amount of subdivided land almost exactly parallel with Calgary, there is a parcel of land which is legally defined as part of the north half of Sec. 25, Twp. 52, Range 25, west of the 4th Meridian, bounded on one side by the Saskatchewan river, containing 186 acres, with a steep bank running across the property. The centre of the area is three miles from the centre of the city. In 1913 and 1914 the assessment on this unsubdivided land was on the basis of \$2,500 an acre; and from 1913 to 1920 the tax levy of the city against this property amounted to \$34,189.59.

Such high assessment and taxation from unproductive land eventually results in confiscation. In Calgary, for instance, the city at the end of 1926 owned over 4 square miles in acreage, and over 73,000 building lots; practically all because of the failure of owners to pay taxes. There is no justification for such an assessment on the plea that land was being held back and was needed for development, nor because it was necessary that land that had got into private ownership should be taxed until brought

back into the public domain. As soon as title to the land is secured it is at once placed on the market again, nearly always sold without any reservations, and sometimes at 25 per cent. below the assessed value. The number who desire public ownership of land, or public control of the use of land seems to be very limited.

EFFECT OF HIGH LAND VALUE ON USE FOR DWELLINGS

High land values are by no means confined to the western provinces. Speaking in Ottawa in 1915, Sir Clifford Sifton, then Chairman of the Commission of Conservation said:—

We have not yet arrived at any kind of understanding of the values of land. The other day some land near the city of Montreal came into my hands, owing to the failure of people to pay claims that were against it. It was vacant land, away outside of Montreal. I declare, I was amazed and ashamed when I saw the valuation put upon it—amazed and ashamed that the working men, the people who had to get places to live in, had to pay such prices as were placed on that land by responsible valuers, who based their valuations on the prices ruling for land lying around it.

The demand for a high, and often fictitious assessment, so as to secure a low rate of taxation, has too often been heeded, and often with disastrous consequences. There can be no justification for a municipality maintaining an assessment of \$3,306,980, when a Provincial Equalization Assessment Board maintains that a fair assessment is \$328,500. And this is by no means a solitary and peculiar case that this Board had to face.

The success and prosperity of this Dominion does not solely depend upon the extent and wealth of its natural resources in mine and field and forest. *It depends far more upon a contented population, both rural and urban.* Contentment depends largely upon methods of living, and this is more particularly the case in urban communities. A log cabin on 160 acres of homestead land usually offers greater possibilities of happiness than a shack on a 25 ft. lot. The kind of housing and the cost which it entails, and therefore the possibilities of its acquisition by the people who need shelter, depends mainly upon the proper use of the land. In the past the efforts of all government authorities, reflecting the opinion of the people, seems to have been directed more towards raising and maintaining a high selling price of land rather than a proper use of it. Assessments for taxation purposes have been used to further this motive. But, as already shown, these methods may defeat their own ends. *They have also created a tremendous waste in land, both for agriculture and urban use.* Land that should be productive under cultivation near to markets lies idle from year to year. Vacant lots held for rising

land values force people to live far from their place of employment. A wide dispersion of population, with all the added cost of municipal development, is found on the one hand; and on the other hand there is a concentration of population in multi-family dwellings, which is inimical to a healthy family life, and thus anti-social.

AN URGENT NEED FOR THE PRESENT DAY

The most urgent need of the present day in most Canadian communities is the definite setting aside of areas of land that can only be used for residential purposes, without any restrictions as to the value of the buildings to be erected. Building by-laws can take care of the character and quality of the building better than the fixing of an arbitrary price. Assessment on the land value should then be on the fair basis of site value for a dwelling, fixed by a rental which the earning powers of the occupants justify them in paying. To-day on land values alone the poorest people pay more in taxation per square foot of land that they occupy than the wealthiest in the most highly restricted residential districts. For some years at least a greater levy on land value alone for taxation purposes, was made on the 400 acres annexed to the city of Vancouver before referred to, and occupied entirely by working people, than on a similar area of the same extent bounded by the same avenues, one mile to the west, occupied by the wealthiest citizens. In that area not a single dwelling could be erected under \$5,000 in value, and many were nearer \$50,000. In the working class area not a single dwelling was assessed at \$5,000 building value.

The assessment of great areas of land in many Canadian cities is fixed at a fictitious value, as shown by the fact that it offered for sale at 25 per cent. below assessment. The way to get that value down to a fair basis, and the greater probability of putting the land to proper use, is to decide on its purpose. The President of the United States has recently appointed a committee to make their contribution to a study, the objective of which, as defined by President Hoover himself, is to enable "anybody of sound character and industrious habits to provide himself with adequate housing and preferably, buy his own home." That there is some need for that study and objective is shown by the fact that it is now known that in the United States one-half of the annual increase in urban population is now housed in other than single-family dwellings. There is not the slightest doubt that methods of land development, and methods of assessment and taxation devised to aid such developments, have had a great deal to do with this remarkable change in the life of a nation. Evidence that this change is taking place in the life of the people of this Dominion was submitted in an article by the author on "Current Trends in House Building" on page 28, Volume 9, of this Journal.

REGIONAL PLANNING AND EMPLOYMENT

From *The New Statesman*, London.

There is seldom much cause for rejoicing in the appointment of a new Government Committee; too often it means only that one more problem, urgently requiring action has been safely shelved for the time. But we are heartily glad to see that the Minister of Health has set up a new Departmental Committee on the question of regional planning, and that the terms of reference seem to point to positive action. For regional planning is in itself vital for the future of urban and rural England, and it is also a practical method of tackling a large part of our present unemployment problem.

Town-planning is now a recognised part of our national policy of urban development, and is being slowly extended over our growing urban areas. But regional planning, which is no less essential, and which is moreover a necessary condition of effective town-planning, is still in its infancy. It is true that regional plans have been prepared, or are in preparation for a good many of the densely populated areas, and for some, such as the Doncaster region, which are spreading fast with the development of new industrial enterprises. But, while there are many regional plans in existence, there is at present no ready means of getting any of them carried into effect. The bodies which supervise their preparation are purely advisory, and consist usually of representatives of a number of independent local authorities. These advisory bodies have no powers of their own; and it is a task passing the wit of man to get a co-ordinated policy adopted and carried out by all the independent authorities which must work closely together before any regional plan can be put into execution. Moreover, even if all the authorities concerned were ready to act together—a large assumption—they would find under present conditions no body through which they could effectively act. Consequently, although recommendations here and there of Joint Town-planning Advisory Committees have been carried into operation, for the most part their larger plans of regional development remain mere aspirations.

Mr. Greenwood's new Committee is instructed to go through all the plans that have been prepared, and to recommend what schemes can usefully be put in hand, what they will cost, what economic return can be anticipated from them, how they can be speeded up, and how much employment they will be likely to afford. These terms of reference make it clear that the Minister is aiming at the discovery of new means whereby the State can provide work, and at eliminating the serious delays that have occurred whenever this has been tried through the ordinary channels of local government.

Obviously, these questions raise big issues. For there cannot be any escape from the delays as long as the executive power for the schemes in question is vested in the hands of a host of separate local authorities, and there exists no regional authority capable of assuming any general control. The new Committee, we venture to suggest will not get far with its task without finding itself up against a serious problem of local government organisation, nor be able to propose effective action without at the same time recommending the creation of a new type of authority to assume regional responsibility for it.

Take an obvious example. For a particular area, embracing several largish towns and the countryside within whose boundaries they lie, a regional plan has been already prepared. This plan contemplates the zoning of the area, so as to provide for the building of new factories in certain districts, the housing of increasing, or the re-housing of congested, population in certain others, the reservation of certain areas for agriculture, for park-land, for allotments, for playing-fields and open spaces, and the development of an adequate system of transportation, including road-building, in proper relation to this planning of the area as a whole.

Under present conditions, a plan of the sort can be made effective only if, both positively and negatively, all the local authorities in the region give it their fullest support. It involves, in the first place, negative restrictions. The building of factories and houses in the wrong places must be prevented; and, if even a very few authorities will not take their share in enforcing this policy, they may easily wreck the entire scheme. Moreover, in a positive sense, the building of roads, the reservation of open spaces, the creation of playing-fields, and a host of other matters need to be determined in accordance with the general plan, and executed in many cases for the service of areas which do not at all coincide with the separate areas of the various local bodies concerned. It will not really do for each separate local authority to be left to carry out independently, or not to carry out, its own section of the scheme. The need is for a general executive authority, empowered actually to supervise the doing of the regional work over the region as a whole.

It is, however, certain that the attempt to create any such regional authority will arouse a good deal of local opposition, partly on the score of mere parochialism, and partly because any regional scheme is bound to tread on someone's toes, and to arouse the hostility of some local interests. If we wait for the local authorities of their own volition to

create effective regional authorities, or to surrender their powers into the hands of any such bodies, we shall wait for ever. In this, as in other matters, the initiative will have to come from the central government.

The whole matter is, of course, closely bound up with our national policy in both road-building and housing. Many people think that the present road policy is wrongly conceived, in that we are building most of our roads largely through existing centres of population, instead of using them to open up new areas. And many regret that our present housing policy results mainly in the building of new houses all round the edges of towns, which are often too large already, instead of making possible the creation of new centres of population, suitable for industrial as well as for residential purposes.

These two questions go together, and form in addition the kernel of the problem of regional development. For it would be easy so to plan the road-systems as to open up new areas for urban settlement, and so to shape housing policy as to make new towns instead of adding to old ones, and to spread the population out over the country instead of increasing congestion of men and traffic in the existing centres. But none of these things will be done until there are regional bodies capable not only of making plans, but of supervising their execution.

We do not know how far Mr. Greenwood's new Committee is meant to go into questions of this order. Perhaps not very far. Perhaps it will only report that among the plans already prepared by Joint Town-Planning Advisory Committees there are a great number which would provide employment, be nationally useful, and not cost too much to be on balance worth while in view of the prospective economic and non-economic returns. Even this will be a good deal; for it will dispose of the argument, still quite commonly heard, that there is no useful work waiting to be done, or at any rate not enough to employ any considerable number of those who are out of work. No one who has studied the reports of the various Advisory Committees during the past few years can reasonably doubt either that there is a great deal of useful work waiting to be done, or that the chances of getting it done under the existing conditions are infinitesimally small.

If, however, Mr. Greenwood's Committee stops there, it will help us with an argument, but will not provide us with a scheme. We hope, therefore, that it will go further and propose, for certain areas in which Joint Town-Planning Reports have prepared the way, the creation of bodies of regional commissioners, with adequate powers to take positive action, and, if necessary, to override the delays and oppositions of local bodies which pursue a merely selfish or parochial point of view. Of course, these commissioners could not be given a free hand. Local

interests and standpoints would have to be fully considered, and wherever possible conciliated. Much of the work might be actually done by the local authorities, rather than by the commissioners. But we are convinced that, just as the problem of electricity did not begin to be effectively tackled until there came into existence a body with sufficient powers to enforce a co-ordinated scheme, so it is in the wider field of general regional development.

We need, in short, at the centre a new Development Commission, stimulating, supervising, and financially assisting regional commissioners in the main areas of development. We need such a body, both in order that the great economic transition through which we are passing, with the decline of our older industries and the need for creating new ones in their place, may be planned and organised aright, and lest unregulated growth, which the local authorities of to-day are too small and isolated to guide, may ruin the face of the country, and cause a great unnecessary destruction of economic and social values. And we need such a body also because in it lies the one hope of cutting out the delays and evasions which thwart every endeavour to deal with the problem of unemployment on constructive national lines. If Mr. Greenwood's Committee will not give us this, it does at least point a finger in the right direction.

VISTAS

A lady writes from Chambly Canton, Quebec, pleading that more care should be taken in the retaining of vistas:

Where roads, streets or avenues cannot be made to end in artistic building—if it is necessary to check the public vision with a building at all—I think it would be more beneficial in every way if an open space were left.

Illustrating, our correspondent states that an exquisite mountain view is cut off in the street where she lives by a house which might just as well have been placed a little to one side.

What that vista would mean to all those coming down that street from day to day is not to be estimated.

A similar view was cut off by the erection of a small garage:

Such a small thing to block so large and exquisite a vista. For the sake of beauty-loving and beauty-needing future generations.

We have written to say that such waste of beauty and robbery of the spiritual possessions of the community will go on until every community has a town planning commission, part of whose duty will be to treasure a vista for the community as eagerly as they would plan a good pavement for traffic, a bathing place by the river and a playground for the children.